



# THE NATIONAL Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE U. S.

1026 17th STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

## CONGRESSIONAL ROUNDUP

**T**HE first session of the 84th Congress adjourned August 2, leaving action on much controversial legislation for consideration in the second session next year. Congress had spoken with almost one voice on foreign policy, although trade legislation was passed by a narrow margin in the House and only after compromise in the Senate. Dissension that crossed party lines developed over some of the Administration's proposals for domestic programs. As one of its last official acts, Congress, in its role of city council for the District of Columbia, passed emergency legislation in connection with a District transportation strike which began July 1 and is still going on as of August 12.

Some of the measures pending at adjournment were of such importance that a mild threat of being called back for an extra session in the fall hung in the air. These measures included proposals on highway, health reinsurance, water resources, and school construction programs.

### LEGISLATIVE ACTION

**Trade:** The Trade Agreements Act was extended for three years, until June 30, 1958. The revised law authorized the President to make limited reductions in some tariff rates, and added provisions to aid domestic producers.

**Hardboard:** A Senate rider to a bill permitting free entry of gifts from Armed Forces personnel, which would have raised the duty on hardboard from 7.5 to 16 $\frac{2}{3}$  per cent, was eliminated in conference.

**Silk:** A Senate rider to the Defense Department Appropriation bill, barring the use of imported silk by the Armed Forces, was approved.

**Philippine Trade:** Revision of the Trade Agreements Act between the

United States and the Philippine Republic was authorized.

**IFC:** Authorization was granted for U. S. participation in the International Finance Corporation, which is to be a subsidiary of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and for payment of \$35 million as the U. S. share of IFC capital. Government and private agencies will combine through the IFC to aid economic projects in less developed countries.

**Foreign Aid:** Mutual Security Act of 1955.

(In millions of dollars)

	Budget Request	Author- ization	Appro- priation
Defense Assistance . . . .	\$2,501	\$2,472	\$2,080
Development Assistance . . .	182	182	162
Technical Assistance . . . .	172 <sup>1</sup>	172 <sup>1</sup>	153 <sup>1</sup>
Other Programs . . . . .	675	459	370
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>\$3,530</b>	<b>\$3,285</b>	<b>\$2,765</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes \$24 million for 18-month U. S. contribution to United Nations Technical Assistance Fund.\*

**Treaties:** The Senate approved 20 treaties, protocols and conventions,

including: the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty; Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China; the protocol restoring sovereignty to the Federal Republic of Germany; the Austrian State Treaty; several Geneva conventions on treatment of the wounded and prisoners of war, and conventions with Japan, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands, on double taxation.

**Formosa Resolution:** The Senate and House authorized the President to use the Armed Forces to protect the security of Formosa, the Pescadores and related territories of that area.

**Internal Security:** A bipartisan Commission on Government Security was created to study the government's over-all security system. The Commission report is due Dec. 31, 1956.

**Housing Act of 1955:** Congress authorized an additional \$4 billion for Federal Housing Administration mortgage insurance; granted 45,000 units of public housing to be constructed in the 1956 fiscal year and removed restrictions on public housing contracts imposed in the 1954 law; expanded the slum clearance and urban renewal program; terminated most of the defense housing program, and made other changes in the basic housing law.

**Pay Raises:** Congress raised annual salaries of its members from \$15,000 (\$12,500 salary, \$2,500 allowance) to \$22,500 and also increased the annual salaries of the Vice President and Speaker of the House from \$30,000 to \$35,000, the Chief Justice from \$25,500 to \$35,500, and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court from \$25,000 to \$35,000. Employees of the Postal Department received an 8 per cent increase and salaries of some other federal employees were raised 7.5 per cent.

### I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT THAT WAY

"No, I have no opinion about tariff rates," said the owner of a fur shop when she was interviewed during a League trade survey. "Tariffs don't affect me very much."

"How much of your stock is in imported furs?" asked the interviewer.

"Oh, about 75 per cent."

"Do you realize that import duties are levied on the skins when they enter this country?"

"They are? Well! From now on I'm going to find out how much duty has been paid on each kind of fur I buy. I don't know why I haven't done this before. It might make a big difference in my line. I just never thought of it that way."

## PENDING LEGISLATION

**OTC:** No action was taken on H. R. 5550,\* to authorize U. S. participation in the Organization for Trade Cooperation. Early hearings are promised in the next session.

**Sugar Quotas:** The House passed H. R. 7030, revising and extending the Sugar Act, increasing domestic producers' share of the market, but the Senate delayed action.

**Customs Simplification:** The House passed H. R. 6040 to change the method of determining value on imports, but the Senate Finance Committee failed to report it to the floor.

**Bricker Amendment:** The Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee which held hearings on S. J. Res. 1,† to limit the President's authority to enter into treaties, reported the bill favorably to the full Committee. Early Committee and floor action is expected in the 1956 session.

**Immigration:** S. 2113, embodying the President's proposals for liberalizing the Refugee Relief Act, and other bills are pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Administration bill would permit 5,000 additional refugees to enter the United States and would make changes in sponsorship requirements.

**Wiretapping:** H. R. 5413, to permit federal law enforcement agencies to use wiretapping in kidnapping and national security cases after the Attorney General gets permission from a federal district court, was reported favorably to the House Judiciary Committee by a Subcommittee.

**Defense Plant Security:** S. 681, to extend the federal security program to employees of defense plants by granting the President broad discretionary powers to apply regulations when he finds that the nation's security is threatened, is pending in the Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**Natural Gas:** The House passed a bill, H. R. 6645, exempting producers and gatherers of natural gas from federal regulation. The Senate Interstate and Commerce Committee favorably reported a similar bill, S. 1853, but Senate deferred action until next year.

**Social Security:** H. R. 7225, amending the Social Security law, was passed by the House. The Senate Finance Committee held hearings but failed to report the bill. As passed by the House, the bill would continue benefits to disabled children after they reach 18 years of age, reduce the eligibility age for disabled workers from 65 to 50, reduce the

eligibility age for women receiving payments from 65 to 62, and make other changes.

**D. C. Home Rule:** The Senate passed S. 669,\* to provide an elected Mayor, Council, and Board of Education for the District of Columbia, but the House District of Columbia Committee took no action.

**Federal Elections:** S. 636, revising the federal election laws to prevent corrupt practices, requiring better reporting of expenditures by and for candidates, and increasing the allowable expenditure by a formula based on the total number of votes cast in state elections, was pending in the Senate.

**Presidential Primaries:** S. 652, H. R. 601 and identical House bills proposed cooperation between the federal government and states desiring to conduct presidential preferential primaries by providing grants to help meet the cost of holding the primaries. A bipartisan Commission would certify to the states the names of candidates received on petitions requesting certification. Delegates to the national political party conventions chosen in the primaries would be pledged to vote for the "popular" state candidate. No action was taken by the Committees to which the bills were referred.

**Electoral College Reform:** S. Res. 31, a proposed constitutional amendment which would abolish the office of presidential elector and divide the electoral votes within each state in direct proportion to the popular vote, was favorably reported to the Senate after hearings on various proposals for changing the process of electing the President. This plan is in substance the same as the Lodge-Gossett resolution which passed the Senate in 1950. Other proposals considered by the Committee included direct popular election and the choice of electors by congressional district, with two from each state elected at large. No action was taken by the Senate.

## HEARINGS

**Bill of Rights Survey:** A Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights will begin on Oct. 3 a series of hearings "to determine to what extent guaranteed individual rights" are being respected and enforced in the United States. The first series will examine what is happening to the individual rights named in the first ten amendments of the Constitution. Expert witnesses will be asked to make expository statements on the field covered by each specific right and to indicate any spe-

cific problem that calls for intensive investigation. Special safeguards for the rights of witnesses appearing before the Committee have been set up. Subcommittee members are Senators Hennings (D., Mo.) chairman, O'Mahoney (D., Wyo.) and Langer (R., N.D.).

## Federal Security Program Hearings:

A Subcommittee of the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee will continue through the fall a series of hearings on the government employees security program.

**A Look at the Economy:** The Joint Committee on the Economy Report has scheduled a series of hearings between Oct. 4 and Dec. 16, to evaluate the Federal Reserve System statistics, automation, unemployment, foreign economic policy, the problem of low-income families, and tax policy.

\* Indicates League support.

† Indicates League opposition.

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